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Environment and sustainable development: further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States; and promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development: action taken at the international, regional and national levels

Report of the Secretary-General**

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* A/55/150.
** Delay due to late receipt of inputs and the need to complete consultations with various agencies.

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I. Introduction

1. At it fifty-fourth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 54/224, entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States", in which it, inter alia, (a) called upon Governments, the regional commissions and organizations and other intergovernmental organizations to support the efforts of the small island developing States, taking into account those areas identified in the review document for priority action, and urged them to take the action necessary for the further implementation of and effective follow-up to the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States; (b) urged all relevant organizations to finalize, preferably before the end of 2000, the work on the development of a vulnerability index, in particular for the small island developing States, which would assist in defining the vulnerability of those States and in identifying the challenges to their sustainable development, for consideration by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly at the appropriate time; and (c) called upon the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to give substantive consideration in its work to the Declaration and review document, adopted at the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly, in its preparations for its tenth session.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly decided to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session, under the item entitled "Environment and sustainable development", a sub-item entitled "Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States"; and requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-fifth session a report on the implementation of that resolution.

3. At its fifty-fourth session, the General Assembly also adopted resolution 54/225, entitled "Promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development" in which, inter alia, it called on Governments, the international community, and the United Nations system, in particular the relevant agencies, actively to support efforts to develop further and implement an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development. Such an approach means that environmental, social, legal and institutional elements are to be included in the planning and management process, with particular regard to environmental and safety aspects of shipping; pollution monitoring and assessment; control of pollution from land-based resources; development of common methodologies for integrated coastal management; conservation of biological diversity; exploitation of fisheries and other marine resources; exploitation of non-living resources; information and data exchange; and security and international and regional cooperation and coordination. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-fifth session, under a sub-item of the item "Environment and sustainable development" on the implementation of resolution 54/225, taking into account the views expressed by relevant regional organizations.

4. In the preparation of the present report, organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, including relevant regional commissions, were approached for submissions of updated accounts of activities undertaken in response to the two resolutions. A number of organizations responded, providing brief reports of activities since 1999; their submissions were the sole source of information on their activities for that period.

5. The present report also includes information on activities undertaken at the regional level by non-United Nations intergovernmental regional bodies and by a number of Governments at the national level.

II. Implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

A. International level

1. Climate change and sea level rise

6. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in particular the Division for Sustainable Development, has been actively involved in the planning and organization of a series of workshops on climate change. The first of these workshops will be held in Samoa in July/August 2000.

7. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has developed an index of comparative

vulnerability to climate change, for application at the national, regional and global levels and strategies for climate change adaptation in small island developing States in the South Pacific, Western Indian Ocean and Caribbean regions. In July 2000, UNEP will also organize, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), an international conference on climate and health in small island States, in Samoa.

8. The Pacific Islands Climate Change Assistance Program (PICCAP) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) encompasses the Cook Islands, Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Samoa. By participating in training, institutional strengthening, and planning activities, these countries will be able to identify their climate change adaptation options. In its "Planning for adaptation to global climate change", GEF is also assisting a group of Caribbean small island States in developing strategies to cope with the adverse effects of global climate change. The participating States are Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. The project seeks to identify cost-effective ways to adapt to climate change, among other enabling activities.

2. Natural and environmental disasters

9. Several actions have been reported under this priority area in the past year. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched in April 2000 a three-year risk reduction initiative for the Caribbean basin. The initiative will strengthen capacities for disaster-risk management and reduction and sustainable post-disaster recovery, with particular focus on highly vulnerable social groups.

10. In the Pacific, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has tried to establish a linkage between its technical cooperation programme and the regional programmes developed by the secretariat for the Pacific Community and the Pacific Ocean Pollution Prevention Programme, developed by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). As a result of the joint efforts, IMO developed three joint regional projects with the secretariat for the Pacific Community related to maritime safety and three regional projects with SPREP for the prevention and control of marine pollution from ships. IMO has also launched a project to develop common safety and load-line regulations for ships that do not meet the size specifications set forth in the International Convention on Load Lines. The regulations will be used as a generic model by small island developing States to be incorporated into their national legislation.

11. Two other IMO projects have been developed relating to assistance in environmental disasters. The first project was launched to train personnel on oil-spill response management and operations. It led to the formation of national marine pollution committees with the private and public sectors. The second project was developed with the objective of assisting in the development of national legislation on pollution control and in the preparation of national and regional pollution contingency plans. A regional model legislation was completed, distributed to all SPREP members and presented at several regional maritime and/or legal workshops. Some small island developing States have started preparing their national marine pollution bills based on the model legislation, and one country has enacted the legislation.

12. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has reported that it has continued its work in this area through two interregional programmes: the International Tsunami Warning System, and the International Strategy for Natural Disaster Reduction.

3. Management of wastes

13. IMO has implemented a project to strengthen and build capacity in the Pacific region in the area of environmental law and management with respect to waste disposal. A workshop was conducted in 1999 and the countries are now preparing for a review of the current status of port reception facilities in the region and the development of port waste-management plans.

14. Through a project on integrated waste management, UNEP, in collaboration with regional partners and the Commonwealth, assisted small island developing States in addressing the challenges and opportunities in developing and adopting integrated waste-management strategies. UNEP has prepared, in collaboration with the Indian Ocean Commission in Mauritius and the Island and Small States Institute in Malta, a series of publications on this subject. UNEP also developed a strategic action plan on municipal wastewater, in partnership with WHO, the United

Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), within the framework of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities. Preparations are under way for the organization of regional consultative meetings in the Caribbean and South Pacific on cooperation for innovative actions in the field of municipal wastewater.

15. In the GEF "Ship-generated waste management" project, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and St. Kitts and Nevis cooperated to improve the collection, treatment, and disposal of waste. Each nation established port-waste reception facilities and collaborated on a common legal framework for regional ship waste management.

4. Coastal and marine resources

16. The Coastal Regions and Small Island (CSI) initiative, established by UNESCO at the twenty-eighth session of its General Conference, is continuing its activities on sustainable island living, planning for changing coastlines, traditional knowledge and management practices, poverty alleviation and freshwater security. UNESCO is also providing assistance to small island developing States through ongoing programmes such as: the Global Ocean Observation System; Planning for Changing Coastlines; the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network; the Coastal Marine Productivity Network; Communication and Education for Sustainable Coastal Development.

17. The UNEP Regional Seas Programme for the Eastern African Region and the Helsinki Commission for Baltic Marine Environment Protection signed an arrangement on 30 May 2000 at the Global Ministerial Environment Forum (Malmo, Sweden). Under the arrangement, the Helsinki Commission will support the Nairobi Convention by acting as a goodwill ambassador for its work and providing technical assistance to its member States (which include Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles). The arrangement identifies three priority areas: sewage management, including training on how to maintain, run, and finance waste water treatment plants; the drafting of a protocol on land-based sources of pollution; and sharing experiences on integrated coastal area management, including capacity-building.

18. An integrated environmental assessment of the marine and coastal areas of the Caribbean, in cooperation with the Centre for Engineering and Environmental Management of Bays and Coasts, Cuba, has been initiated within the Caribbean Environment Outlook process. The assessment is an extension of the three assessments on the state of the environment for the Caribbean, Western Indian Ocean and Pacific Islands which were produced by UNEP and coordinated, respectively, by the University of the West Indies Centre for Environment and Development, the Indian Ocean Commission, and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme. The three subregional Environment Outlook reports were launched on the occasion of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly. The marine and coastal study will be launched in late 2000 and fed into the Global Environment Outlook process.

19. As far as projects are concerned, UNEP is playing a regional coordinating role in a UNDP/GEF project on the rehabilitation of contaminated bays, which addresses the rehabilitation of Kingston Harbour, Jamaica, and Havana Bay, Cuba. The project will be implemented over five years and calls for nutrient removal components for new sewage treatment facilities to be constructed in the two bays. As part of the project, various region-wide training courses on sewage treatment technologies will be conducted, providing greater regional benefit for all small island developing States in the Caribbean.

20. Over-exploited coastal resources, environmental degradation, and land-based pollution are growing threats in the Pacific islands. In the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu, GEF is financing a SPREP-coordinated project, entitled Implementation of the Strategic Action Program (SAP) of the Pacific small island developing States, which seeks to conserve and protect both freshwater supplies and marine resources. Other activities include the Western Indian Ocean islands oil spill contingency planning project in Comoros, Mauritius, and Seychelles.

5. Freshwater resources

21. UNESCO continues to address this priority area in two programmes, Groundwater Recharge and Contamination Studies, and Community Knowledge of Water Resources.

22. UNEP has developed a source book on alternative technologies for freshwater augmentation in small island developing States.

6. Land resources

23. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has reported that a series of regional and international conferences and initiatives have been either organized or promoted specifically to address issues common to small island developing States in the agricultural sector and to facilitate contacts and exchanges of view. A number of other meetings or seminars were also held in the Pacific and the Caribbean on various specific issues, such as food quality control, implementation of CODEX standards, and the implications of the Uruguay Round agreements. Recently FAO prepared a draft regional strategy for agricultural development and food security and a regional programme for food security. The two documents were submitted to CARIFORUM and South Pacific Forum in May 1999 and June 1999, respectively. As a continuation of its efforts to assist small island developing States in developing their capacities in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, FAO organized the Special Ministerial Conference on Agriculture in Small Island Developing States in March 1999. Delegates from 85 member nations of FAO, including 29 small island developing States, attended the Conference. The main objective was to develop a plan of action consisting of programmes/projects in support of sustainable agricultural development in small island developing States. The Plan of Action was endorsed by the FAO Council in June 1999 and subsequently submitted to the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly.

24. In the field of international agricultural trade, FAO has strengthened its liaison office in Geneva, created a special web site on the Internet containing all necessary and current information, and launched a broad training programme, with a view to assisting developing countries and particularly small island developing States. A series of subregional workshops are being held for this purpose — one for the Pacific Islands, in November 1999, and one for the Caribbean, in January 2000. Other small island developing States will participate in workshops organized for other regions. Additionally, FAO has embarked on national project activities in the Caribbean, in particular in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana.

7. Energy resource

25. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has continued to carry out technical cooperation projects in various small island developing States. In the Solomon Islands, the Department undertook a project on solar home systems. The objective was to provide basic electricity services to 56 households and to two schools in the Makaruka village. It also involved efforts aimed at educating people about payment schemes, defining training requirements and methodology, and coordinating with governmental agencies. In St. Lucia, the Department completed in 1999 a photovoltaic project which helped to bring electricity to sites where extension of the grid had been discouraged. In Mauritius, the Department is involved with the Outer Islands Development Corporation in a project that envisages the installation of a photovoltaic system for providing electricity to 15 houses in the atoll of Agalega. The project is intended to cover an additional 15 newly constructed houses. In Micronesia, in Pohnpei state, the Department is currently implementing a project involving the supply of solar photovoltaic systems for some unelectrified regions. In the Marshall Islands, the Department is carrying out a solar photovoltaic project for the electrification of the health centres of the Outer Islands. It is planning to undertake a demonstration project in Fiji that will consist of generating electricity by harnessing the energy of ocean waves. The village of Muani on the southern part of the island of Kadavu has been identified as the potential site. It is also active in Papua New Guinea. Based on the visit of a project identification team to Managalas Plateau in Ore province, a project has been designed to improve the socio-economic well-being of the local communities by catalyzing the development of small hydropower resources in the region and introducing to dispersed locations solar photovoltaic systems for lighting, education, communication, and the preservation of medicines. In addition, the Department is co-organizing with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) a workshop on energy for sustainable development, a capacity-building initiative in preparation for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The workshop will be held in Cyprus in January 2001.

26. The World Solar Programme of UNESCO continues to address energy issues for small islands States towards the development of solar and renewable energies to lessen dependence on expensive imported oil.

27. GEF is assisting Jamaica, Cape Verde and Mauritius to reduce their excessive dependence on fossil fuels, through projects that promote the use of energy-efficient equipment, develop local capacity to supply and install photovoltaic systems, and incorporate energy-producing procedures.

8. Tourism resources

28. UNEP convened a regional seminar on sustainable tourism and competitiveness in the small islands of the Mediterranean (Capri Island, Italy, 17-20 May 2000), in cooperation with the World Tourism Organization, as a follow-up to the Global Conference on Sustainable Tourism in Small Island States (Lanzarote, October 1998). UNEP is promoting practical tools and voluntary codes to enhance the environmental performance and operations of tourism facilities in small island developing States. UNEP is also collaborating with WTO and UNESCO for the promotion of voluntary initiatives and partnerships among stakeholders in sustainable tourism development via the recently launched Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development (Berlin, March 2000).

9. Biodiversity resources

29. UNESCO continues to implement its interregional project "Integrated biodiversity strategies for island and coastal areas", launched in 1996. The aim is to provide assistance in the formulation of integrated biodiversity strategies for interregional cooperation between coastal States and islands and to promote implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. In these programme areas, UNESCO is also providing assistance to small island developing States through its programmes entitled "People and Plants" and "World Heritage Natural and Cultural Sites".

30. UNEP is currently supporting the International Coral Reef Initiative and Action Network (ICRAN) through pilot activities in the Caribbean, eastern Africa and the East Asian seas, identifying successful examples of protected marine areas, including demonstration sites, reefs-at-risk analysis and best management practices. Coral reef assessments and monitoring have been carried out in most small island developing States of the Caribbean region. Results will be included in the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) report, which will help in the identification of key areas for intervention. In addition, UNEP has provided training to managers of protected marine areas from Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, in all aspects of the management of such areas and in conducting local training activities to increase knowledge and skills. Additionally, a small fund for protected marine areas is being established to provide direct technical assistance. A GEF project proposal is also currently under consideration for small island developing States in the Caribbean to address biodiversity loss issues.

31. GEF has funded projects in various countries. High levels of endemism in Cuba's diverse marine and coastal ecosystems led to a project on protecting biodiversity and establishing sustainable development in the Habana Camaguey region. In the Dominican Republic, a project on biodiversity conservation and management in the coastal zone engaged local stakeholders in developing and implementing a coastal zone management model. Other biodiversity restoration and conservation projects have been launched in Mauritius, the Seychelles, the Comoros, in 15 South Pacific countries and in Papua New Guinea. Additionally, in nearly all of the small island developing States, the GEF Enabling Activities Programme supports national obligations related to both the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Participating small island developing States have either completed or are completing their biodiversity strategies and action plans and national communications for the two Conventions.

10. National institutions and administrative capacity

32. UNDP has formulated a flagship project focusing on strengthening national capacity in selected small island developing States to support the accelerated growth of small and medium-size enterprises and to enhance their international competitiveness, so as to facilitate their integration into the global economy. In the context of support for the adoption of national

strategies for sustainable development, UNDP has provided assistance through its Capacity 21 Fund and within the framework of the Sustainable Network programme, to strengthen national capacities for the formulation and implementation of those strategies. Under GEF, UNDP has also provided assistance to small island developing States in the formulation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. In addition, as the designated focal point for the UNDP follow-up to the Barbados Programme of Action, the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries continues to provide assistance in the formulation of a small island developing States assistance programme and supports the participation of trainers in the training courses at the ILO/Turin Training Centre.

33. In the Caribbean region, IMO has provided technical backstopping and participated actively in the project management committee of a project designed to support the upgrading of administrative and legal regimes in the Caribbean States and Territories for the effective implementation of the Caribbean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control, signed in Barbados in February 1996. In the Pacific, IMO has begun to implement a project whose aim is to provide institutional support for the upgrading of maritime training programmes and the establishment of examination and certification systems in line with the relevant IMO conventions. Another project was developed with the objective of updating the South Pacific maritime code in order to provide island countries with a viable means to comply with the new requirements of international conventions. In the Indian Ocean region, IMO has reported that Maldives participated in ongoing regional projects, such as the upgrading of national maritime administrations for the effective implementation of IMO standards; regional training courses for port State control inspectors; regional workshops on port reception facilities and on an oil spills contingency plan; and the development of flag and port States' capabilities in the Indian Ocean.

34. In Cuba, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has launched its Integrated Programme to Support the National Strategy on Industrial Competitiveness. The Programme aims at advising industrial policy and national support capacities and ensuring efficient use of energy resources. A working arrangement between UNDP, Cuba and UNIDO was concluded to secure ways of coordination and cooperation, with particular emphasis on additional fund-raising. In Jamaica, UNIDO has launched a project entitled "Strengthening the competitiveness of the Jamaican manufacturing sector, with special emphasis on small and medium enterprises, phase II". The aim of this large-scale project is to increase the contribution of small and medium-sized enterprises. An impact assessment at the end of the ongoing phase II is being undertaken.

35. Since the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs — in particular, the Small Island Developing States Unit of the Division for Sustainable Development — has been strengthened by the appointment of an interregional advisor. Additionally, the proposed move of SIDSNet to the Department will further strengthen this consolidation of efforts, and will facilitate information dissemination and gathering. Funding for SIDSNet has been provided by the Governments of Italy and Norway. Other donors have pledged their support. The Department will also cooperate, by facilitating information-sharing through SIDSNet, with the Singapore technical assistance programme for small island developing States — SIDSTEC.

36. In order to move forward strategically and comprehensively to respond to the needs of developing countries, including small island developing States, GEF launched the Capacity Development Initiative (CDI). The Initiative is an 18-month consultative planning process which should result in a comprehensive strategy and multi-year operations-oriented action plans to assist GEF-eligible countries to strengthen their capacity to meet the challenges of global environmental management in the areas of biodiversity, climate change and land degradation. The Initiative is currently assessing the capacity-building needs of small island developing States.

11. Transport and communication

37. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) continues to organize a series of workshops and seminars that assist States in implementing the Convention on International Civil Aviation, and in fulfilling the statistical reporting requirements in article 15 of the Convention. Small island developing States are being supported through the ICAO Technical Cooperation Programme and in particular, through the ongoing Civil Aviation Purchasing Service (CAPS)

project. Navigational aids (very high frequency omni-directional radio range and co-located distance measuring equipment) are being purchased for the new Praia International Airport, Cape Verde. The air cargo facility at Grantley Adam International Airport, Barbados, will expand under the ICAO Technical Cooperation project.

12. Human resources development

38. In collaboration with the Government of Singapore, UNDP — in particular, the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries — provided training in Singapore for Caribbean officials in environmental technology and management, telecommunications, building services, information technology management and civil aviation management.

39. IMO has reported that its technical cooperation programme for the region for 2000-2001 focused on human resource development. Partial funding has been secured for the programme, and IMO is in the process of developing project activities with the assistance of SPC and SPREP.

40. A project document identifying the educational and training needs in the Caribbean region, in the areas of professional training, informal education, communications media and community training, has been developed by UNEP in cooperation with the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) and the Centre for Environmental Information, Management and Education, in Cuba. The project will begin implementation in 2000-2001, as soon as funds are secured.

13. Social and cultural development

41. UNESCO continues to hold consultations with small island developing States on social and cultural development. The first consultation processes — "Focus on the Pacific" and "Focus on the Caribbean" — were successfully launched at UNESCO headquarters on 1 November 1997 and 10 October 1998 respectively. The overall objective is to address the specific needs of small island developing States and cooperate with them in elaborating their own agendas for peace and development, in UNESCO's fields of competence. Within the structure of "Focus on the Pacific" and as part of a subregional strategy, an intersectoral project entitled "Human development for sustainable living conditions in the Pacific" has been included in the programme and budget for 2000-2001. Similarly, the intersectoral project, "Caribbean people: tapestry of the past, fabric for the future: special project on human development for sustainable living in the Caribbean", submitted by the Caribbean subregion at the launch of "Focus on the Caribbean", has been incorporated. In addition, UNESCO organized the Indian Ocean Forum 2000 in Mauritius, from 29 to 31 March 1999. The Forum sought to enable participating countries and international and subregional organizations to establish more extensive cooperation, develop jointly a regional strategy and identify some national and subregional projects for integration into UNESCO's programme. An agreement of cooperation between UNESCO and the Indian Ocean Commission was signed in December 1999.

14. Vulnerability index

42. The General Assembly, in resolution 54/224, urges relevant international organizations, such as the United Nations Secretariat, and UNCTAD, to work towards an early conclusion of their work on the development of a vulnerability index for small island developing States.

43. Organizations have focused their efforts to collect relevant data on different criteria or aspects of vulnerability. The work of the Committee for Development Policy, for example, has focused on the least developed and other low-income countries. Several of the countries on its list are not included in the work of the Commonwealth secretariat, the Caribbean Development Bank or United Nations University (UNU). Moreover, comprehensive data are not available for all relevant countries. The Caribbean Development Bank, given its regional mandate, has been successful in collecting data for a number of Caribbean economies not included in the work of the Committee for Development Policy or the Commonwealth secretariat. The South Pacific Applied Geosciences Commission (SOPAC), has so far examined four developing island States; of them, Samoa and Tuvalu are not included in the work of the Caribbean Development Bank or UNU, and Tuvalu is not included in the work of the Commonwealth secretariat.

44. The Committee for Development Policy has completed a version of an economic vulnerability index (EVI) designed to quantify vulnerability and hence

provide a means to identify the least developed among the developing States. Covering 128 countries, it identifies three key aspects of economic vulnerability: size and structure of the economy; exposure to international trade shocks; and exposure to natural disasters. The Caribbean Development Bank has completed a version of an EVI covering 95 countries, for use in highlighting an important aspect of the development challenge facing Caribbean developing countries. The Bank's EVI identifies five factors: peripherality and energy dependence; export concentration; convergence of export destination; reliance upon external finance; and susceptibility to natural disasters. The Commonwealth secretariat has completed a version of an EVI to serve as an operational tool in determining whether small States should be accorded differential treatment by the international development community. It identifies income volatility and resilience as the two key dimensions of vulnerability.

45. The United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU/IAS) has completed a version of a geographical vulnerability index (GVI), covering 100 developing countries, as a possible extension of economic vulnerability. Its main purpose is to measure geographical vulnerability with special reference to small island developing States. The outcome of the Barbados Conference differentiated ecological fragility from economic vulnerability. Several organizations have responded to this suggestion. The Commonwealth secretariat has completed work on a version of an environmental index meant to be applicable to developing and island States and has compiled low variants for 111 countries. Six indicators were selected to reflect pressure on the natural environment: annual rate of deforestation, 1980-1990; population density relative to land area; annual water use as a percentage of total water resources, 1980-1990; ratio of coastline to land area; ratio of threatened species to land area; and ratio of total number of natural disasters to land area, 1970-1996.

46. The focus of SOPAC is on the vulnerability of the environment itself to both human and natural hazards. SOPAC identifies three aspects of environmental vulnerability: level of potential risks (or pressures) which act on the environment; resilience of the environment to risks, or intrinsic vulnerability; and the level of degradation of ecosystems, or intrinsic resilience. In collaboration with the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy, Yale University, the Center for International Earth Science Information Network, and Columbia University, the World Economic Forum task force has produced a pilot environmental sustainability index.

47. In addition to the work described above on the construction of indices, country-specific work has been undertaken by UNCTAD on economic vulnerability, and a process has begun under the auspices of UNEP to explore the vulnerability of countries to global climate change. UNCTAD work in support of the Barbados Programme of Action involves action for the benefit of small island developing States as a group to support the countries in their advocacy of greater recognition by the international community on grounds of economic vulnerability related to special handicaps; research and analysis to increase awareness of issues specific to small island developing States and possible responses to those issues in the context of trade liberalization and globalization; and direct technical assistance to individual small island developing States and regional bodies in various areas relevant to those subjects. UNCTAD has prepared country-specific vulnerability profiles of Cape Verde, Maldives, Samoa and Vanuatu, as requested inputs to the review by the Committee for Development Policy of the list of the least developed countries in 2000. UNCTAD has also assisted AOSIS in its preparation for the tenth session of UNCTAD (February 2000), in particular, through a paper entitled "Small island developing States: overview of issues and proposed agenda for overcoming vulnerability". In addition to participating in the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States, UNCTAD is preparing a publication, "Small island developing States: issues of vulnerability and new economic opportunities".

48. As mentioned above, UNEP launched a process on assessment of vulnerability to climate change by organizing an international workshop in October 1999. The process is intended to ensure that methodologies for assessing vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change, and adaptability to the impacts of climate change, including an index of vulnerability, will meet the needs of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, address the commitment of subsequent protocols and help advance work on stage II adaptation in GEF. UNEP has also been supporting the development of the environmental vulnerability index by co-sponsoring the EVI Think

Tank Meeting in Fiji (7-10 September 1999) and by convening a meeting to consider extending the EVI developed by SOPAC to other regions with small islands.

16. Trade

49. UNCTAD has recently provided direct assistance to three small island developing States in the Caribbean and the Pacific on subjects relevant to trade policy, investment policy, trade efficiency, competitiveness of the manufacturing sector and development of international financial services. Assistance is also provided to the five least developed small island developing States of the Pacific (Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu), through cooperation with the Forum secretariat, in their preparations for a regional round table meeting to be organized under the integrated framework for trade development of the least developed countries, and for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (May 2001).

B. Regional level

1. The African region

50. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has concentrated its efforts on population and the natural environment in the African small island developing States by assisting national officials with advice on data analysis and research and by helping countries prepare plans and project documents for funding of the next population and housing census. ECA is also conducting training courses on census data analysis. Activities and field missions on population matters have been generally undertaken jointly by the Commission and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

2. The Caribbean region

51. The activities of the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC) undertaken in pursuit of resolution 54/224 have been dedicated to providing information and sharing perspectives with Caribbean small island developing States and enlisting the support of other regional agencies for the Barbados Programme of Action and its implementation. ECLAC has also convened regional meetings with a specific focus on small island developing States. Activities currently envisaged in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action include a final comprehensive review of the work programme, which will take into account the decision taken at the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly. The work programme for the 2000-2001 biennium includes the preparation of a meeting of governmental authorities to draw up a plan of subregional activities for the Caribbean following the assessment of the implementation of the Programme of Action.

52. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has reported that specific action has been taken in a number of areas to promote the Programme of Action. To address the issue of climate change, the 12 CARICOM member countries are currently involved in, inter alia, the implementation of a regional project, "Caribbean planning for adaptation to global climate change", which will be completed in 2001. The project's main objective is to support Caribbean countries in preparing to cope with the adverse effects of global climate change through vulnerability assessment, adaptation planning and capacity-building. The region is also studying the establishment of a Caribbean centre which would focus solely on addressing the specific problems associated with global climate change. In the area of energy resources, the Caribbean Energy Information System (CEIS) is in the process of designing a regional approach to deal with barriers that severely affect the ability of the region to move towards self-reliance. Additionally, CARICOM, through the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute has, among other activities, organized a number of consultative meetings and training workshops on integrated water resources management.

C. National level

1. African countries

53. Mauritius is engaged, at both the national and regional levels, in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. The country is fully involved in regional action under the Indian Ocean Commission. The focus areas are coastal and marine resource management and fresh water resources management. The Government of Mauritius has reported on the implementation of environmental projects under the Environmental Investment Programme I. It has also prepared a blueprint within its national environmental

strategies for the next decade (2000-2010) and in line with requirements of Agenda 21 and the Programme of Action. Some 19 environmental programmes including about 70 projects, have been identified and will be implemented by various ministers and organizations.

2. Mediterranean countries

54. The Government of Cyprus has reported the undertaking of a methodical process to streamline its environmental policy and legislation with those of the European Union. An action plan for the protection of the environment has been approved by the Council of Ministers, while a number of legal, administrative, institutional and technical measures have been put in place, as part of an overall environmental policy. The action plan is the formal environmental policy document of the Government. It deals with horizontal integration issues such as fiscal instruments, information, research and participation, and with subject matter issues in the fields of general environmental policy, water protection and management, waste management, radiation, atmosphere, noise, chemicals, industrial accidents, biotechnology and the protection of nature and wildlife. The Government of Cyprus has also ratified all major environmental conventions. A comprehensive (draft) bill for the protection of the environment has been prepared, aimed at covering a large part of the EU legislation.

III. Promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development

55. An account of the activities undertaken on an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea is given below.

56. UNDP reported that its Capacity 21 programme had helped to avoid duplication of efforts and optimize the rational use of human and institutional capabilities through, inter alia, the provision of technical and advisory support on strengthening institutional capabilities of Governments for implementing sustainable development and through the establishment of mechanisms for national consultations that facilitated greater collaboration among stakeholders.

57. In response to decisions taken at the 12th meeting of the Forum of Ministers, UNEP, through its Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, will be undertaking the organization of a judicial symposium with the aim of generating dialogue among national magistrates on the topics of environmental law and sustainable development and access to environmental justice, and national-level integrated environmental assessment and reporting workshops.

58. The Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) of UNEP is responsible for coordinating regional action for the protection and development of the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean region. Most of its programmes and activities are related to small island developing States. The Programme is promoting and implementing an integrated approach to the management of the Wider Caribbean Sea. In particular, it has begun development of a GEF project to assist all Caribbean island States in integrating the management of freshwater and coastal resources. The project includes many components related to sustainable development — i.e., the balance between environmental protection and economic concerns such as agriculture and tourism. UNEP is also supporting actions to address land-based sources of marine pollution. CEP supported the Wider Caribbean countries in their adoption of a protocol concerning pollution from land-based sources and activities (6 October 1999) to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention) and is now developing projects and activities for its implementation. The activities will address pollution from domestic sewage, industrial wastes and agricultural non-point pollution. In the area of emergency response and the containment of environmental damage due to accidents or incidents relating to maritime transport, member Governments recently accepted an offer by the Government of the Netherlands Antilles to establish a regional training and information centre in Curaçao for oil-spill response and contingency planning under the institutional framework of CEP and the Protocol to the Cartagena Convention concerning Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region.

59. The second general meeting of the United Nations system and CARICOM was held in March 2000 in the Bahamas. The meeting recognized that the aim of the General Assembly in resolution 54/225 was

to secure the adoption of an internationally recognized instrument to promote the integrated management and sustainable development of the Caribbean marine environment. It was also noted that the integrated management approach to the region's maritime sector would be further enhanced through continued operation of the IMO/UNEP Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Centre, to be headquartered in Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, in June 2001 as a regional activity centre of CEP. The centre will focus on the effective implementation of the Oil Spills Protocol to the Cartagena Convention and of the International Convention on Oil Pollution, Preparedness, Response and Cooperation. An additional protocol to the Convention was adopted at the March 2000 meeting to address preparedness and response in relation to marine pollution caused by hazardous and noxious substances. IMO informed the meeting that the International Code for the Safe Carriage of Packaged Irradiated Nuclear Fuel, Plutonium and High-level Radioactive Wastes on Board Ships (the INF Code), which was adopted by consensus by its Maritime Safety Commission, would become mandatory under chapter VII of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), with effect from 1 January 2001. At the same meeting, UNEP pointed out the necessity of harmonizing with the CARICOM secretariat and countries ongoing activities such as the establishment of a regional network to monitor resources, which would lead to periodic assessment reports on the state of the Caribbean environment. UNIDO reported that it held ample consultations with the representatives of CARICOM on possible areas of cooperation.

60. CARICOM reported that the Caribbean region had a number of initiatives for the sustainable and collaborative management of the Caribbean Sea and its resources. They include the Caribbean Fisheries Resources Assessment and Management Programme, the Caribbean Plan for Adaptation for Global Climate Change, and the Commonwealth Caribbean Ocean Sciences Network. In addition, the CARICOM secretariat and the Association of Caribbean States are collaborating on promoting the development of a plan of action for the implementation of resolution 54/225. CARICOM is also exploring implementation opportunities through other international partnerships with such bodies as GEF, the European Commission, the Caribbean Environment Programme and the Environmental Strategy of the Association of Caribbean States.

61. In May 2000, the Ministry of the Environment of Colombia launched a national programme for sustainable and integrated management and development of coastal zones. The programme is based on the assumption that the sustainable development of coastal areas can be achieved only through the harmonization of cultural, economical and environmental factors. Thus, the programme envisages the setting up of appropriate rules and regulations to balance environmental protection and economic development. The overall objective includes the establishment of a framework and guidelines to address at the national level the integrated management of coastal areas through the institutionalization of the process within existing environmental legislation.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

62. Despite the fact that a large number of regional organizations and national Governments were approached in the preparation of the present report, very little feedback was provided. Yet the organizations of the United Nations system have continued to implement a number of initiatives in the context of the Barbados Programme of Action. It is clear from the information received that the focus has usually been directed at strengthening institutions and human resource capacity. Considerable effort has been made to develop a vulnerability index for small island developing States. Since the report of the ad hoc expert group meeting on vulnerability indices in small island developing States (A/53/65, annex), there has been a proliferation of work in this area. Recent exercises differ with respect to country coverage, number and types of variables used, methods of scaling and weighting, and other methodological aspects. The Economic and Social Council might wish to consider the report of the Committee for Development Policy at its July 2000 session and provide further guidance on the subject, as appropriate.

63. It is clear that there is scope for improving coordination among the United Nations agencies, the regional organizations and national Governments on tasks that are planned as well as ongoing. Many activities covered in the present report were shared with the small island developing States Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs only after

they had taken place and after the information had been specifically requested. It is envisaged that the next phase of SIDSNet will assist the process of information-sharing, especially on programmes that may be of interest to the small island developing States.

64. Very few contributions were received with regard to resolution 54/225. So far, most efforts have been directed at developing a common methodology for environmental assessment reporting and at promoting a coordinated approach to preparedness and responses. Further consideration may need to be given to means of implementing the agenda item, including information-gathering and sharing of responsibility.

Annex

Organizations and Governments that responded to the request for inputs to the present report

Caribbean Community

Economic Commission for Africa

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Global Environment Facility

International Civil Aviation Organization

International Maritime Organization

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

United Nations Development Programme

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

United Nations Environment Programme

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

United Nations Secretariat, Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Colombia

Cyprus

Mauritius